



QR codes for Read/Talk/Podcast

## Q & A Practice - Evaluating/Judging & Measuring Progress

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Here is a Q&A based on the page you provided:

**\*\*Q1: Why are beginning meditators often told not to judge their meditation?\*\***

**\*\*A1:\*\*** Beginning meditators are often told not to judge because they are usually poor at reading their own minds and tend to be impatient. They are advised to trust the process and stick to the method without rushing to conclusions.

**\*\*Q2: When should meditators start evaluating their meditation?\*\***

**\*\*A2:\*\*** After some time, as your practice matures, you should begin to evaluate whether the meditation is working for you. This helps you adjust your approach if it's not yielding results, and increases your mindfulness and discernment.

**\*\*Q3: Why did the Buddha teach different methods of meditation?\*\***

**\*\*A3:\*\*** The Buddha taught different methods of meditation because people's minds vary, and different methods work at different times. The breath meditation serves as a base, but other techniques can help address different mental states or times of difficulty.

**\*\*Q4: How does breath meditation help with mindfulness?\*\***

**\*\*A4:\*\*** Breath meditation helps you become sensitive to your mind because the breath is closely connected to the mind. Changes in mental states, like greed or fear, immediately affect the breath. The breath also offers a tool to steady and refresh the mind.

**\*\*Q5: What role does kamma (action) play in meditation?\*\***

**\*\*A5:\*\*** Kamma helps meditators understand the roots of their present experiences. Your actions and intentions influence your meditation, and past actions may surface during practice. Understanding kamma enables you to interpret your experiences better.

**\*\*Q6: What should meditators do when unskillful thoughts arise?\*\***

**\*\*A6:\*\*** If unskillful thoughts arise, it's important to recognize whether they stem from present actions or past kamma. If the thoughts are unhelpful, return to the breath or adjust your meditation technique to better handle the arising thoughts.

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Here is a Q&A based on the text you provided:

**\*\*Q1: What is the basic strategy for training the mind to end suffering?\*\***

**\*\*A1:\*\*** The basic strategy is to reflect on your actions and evaluate their skillfulness. This process of self-evaluation helps refine your skills, and meditation is no different. It is a practice where you assess what's working and what isn't to improve your meditation.

**\*\*Q2: Why is evaluation important in meditation?\*\***

**\*\*A2:\*\*** Evaluation is essential in meditation because it is part of developing discernment, which ultimately leads to release. By assessing your meditation, you learn what to improve and how to make the process more skillful.

**\*\*Q3: How can you judge whether your meditation session is good or not?\*\***

**\*\*A3:\*\*** It's helpful to learn to judge the difference between a good and a not-so-good session. However, this ability to judge requires practice and isn't something you master immediately. Focus on evaluating your actions rather than judging your worth as a meditator.

**\*\*Q4: What should you avoid in your self-judgments during meditation?\*\***

**\*\*A4:\*\*** Avoid negative self-judgments, which can sap your motivation, or overly positive self-judgments, which can blind you to mistakes. Both types of judgment hinder progress. Instead, maintain a gentle, humorous perspective when self-judging and focus on the next breath.

**\*\*Q5: How should you regard your meditation practice?\*\***

**\*\*A5:\*\*** Regard your meditation as a work in progress. Instead of passing final judgment on yourself, view each session as an opportunity to refine your skill and make improvements. Think of yourself as a craftsman, adjusting your actions for better results.

**\*\*Q6: Are mistakes part of the meditation process?\*\***

**\*\*A6:\*\*** Yes, mistakes are normal and part of the learning process. The best meditators are not those for whom everything goes smoothly, but those who learn from their

<p><b>**Q7: Can a meditation technique cause problems?**</b>  <b>**A7:**</b> Yes, even a good meditation technique can cause problems if misapplied. For instance, focusing too much on body contemplation may lead to negative mental states, while the breath meditation can help clear these states effectively.</p> <p><b>**Q8: How should meditators distinguish between past and present kamma in meditation?**</b>  <b>**A8:**</b> A thought that pops into the mind is likely from past kamma, while your response to that thought is present kamma. This distinction helps meditators understand the source of their thoughts and reactions, which aids in skillfully managing their practice.</p> <p><b>**Q9: What is the difference between good intentions and skillful intentions?**</b>  <b>**A9:**</b> Good intentions are well-meaning but may be misguided or unskillful, often based on misunderstanding. Skillful intentions, on the other hand, lead to well-being without harm and help eliminate greed, anger, or delusion.</p> <p><b>**Q10: How does meditation work as an experiment?**</b>  <b>**A10:**</b> Meditation is an ongoing process of experimentation where you try different techniques, observe their effects, and adjust your approach accordingly. By comparing results over time, you become more patient and sensitive to your mind and body.</p>	<p>mistakes. Take pride in your willingness to notice mistakes and learn from them.</p> <p><b>**Q7: Why is it important not to jump to conclusions about the results of your meditation?**</b>  <b>**A7:**</b> The relationship between actions and results in meditation is complex. Results may be from things you've done recently or even earlier. Avoid jumping to conclusions too quickly, and take the time to observe your meditation over time before making judgments.</p> <p><b>**Q8: How should you handle sudden reversals in your meditation practice?**</b>  <b>**A8:**</b> Sudden reversals, whether positive or negative, are common. When things are going well, stay alert and avoid overconfidence. If things go badly, don't give up; view it as an opportunity to learn more about how the mind works and apply patience and observation.</p> <p><b>**Q9: Why should you not compare your meditation practice to others?**</b>  <b>**A9:**</b> Comparing yourself to others in meditation is unhelpful. Your practice is unique to you, just like their practice is unique to them. Focus on your own meditation rather than comparing your progress to that of others.</p> <p><b>**Q10: Should you compare your meditation to what you've read in books?**</b>  <b>**A10:**</b> No, while books can offer useful ideas and guidance, comparing your practice to what's written in books isn't helpful while meditating. During meditation, focus on your own experience, especially on the breath, and use books as a reference when you're not meditating.</p>
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<p>=====</p> <p>Here is a Q&amp;A based on the page you provided:</p> <p><b>Q1: Why are beginning meditators often told not to judge their meditation?</b>  <b>A1:</b> Beginning meditators are often told not to judge because they lack the experience and maturity to accurately assess their progress. Early on, it's easy to become either overly proud or discouraged, which can hinder progress.</p>	<p>=====</p> <p>Here is a Q&amp;A based on the content from the page you provided:</p> <p><b>Q1: What are the two main mental faculties involved in bringing the mind into concentration?</b>  <b>A1:</b> The two main faculties are directed thought and evaluation. Directed thought focuses on the breath and keeps it prominent in the present moment, while evaluation checks how well the breath and mind are staying together.</p>
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**Q2: How should a meditator approach their practice in the beginning?**

**A2:** A meditator should focus on patience and simply sit with whatever arises. The goal is not to accept things as they are forever but to observe and learn from each experience.

**Q3: What does the Buddha's Rahula meditation teach?**

**A3:** Rahula meditation teaches to make the mind like the elements: water, wind, fire, and earth. These elements are neutral, unaffected by preferences, and capable of handling both good and bad without attachment or aversion.

**Q4: Why is consistency important in meditation?**

**A4:** Consistency allows for steady observation of the mind's patterns. It's like setting up equipment for a scientific experiment, where stability is necessary to observe and understand the cause and effect.

**Q5: What role do honesty and patience play in meditation?**

**A5:** Honesty helps you admit whatever arises in your mind without denial or embellishment, while patience allows you to sit through experiences and learn from them over time.

**Q6: How does meditation relate to scientific inquiry?**

**A6:** Meditation is an experimental process. Just like science, it involves asking questions, testing different techniques, and learning from the results, including discovering what doesn't work.

**Q7: What is the value of making mistakes in meditation?**

**A7:** Mistakes in meditation provide valuable learning experiences. When a particular approach doesn't lead to progress, it's an opportunity to adjust and try other methods until you find what works best.

**Q8: How can you tell the difference between good and bad meditation?**

**A8:** Meditation is ultimately about learning. Every session is good if approached with the right attitude, but bad meditation occurs when assumptions or sloppiness lead to misguided conclusions or a lack of discernment.

**Q2: What role does mindfulness play in meditation?**

**A2:** Mindfulness helps you remember the techniques that have worked in the past and keeps track of the breath and the mind during meditation, ensuring that they stay aligned and focused.

**Q3: How can a meditator assess whether their meditation is going well or not?**

**A3:** In the beginning, meditators need to be articulate and evaluate what's working and what's not. Over time, it becomes more instinctive, and you can sense whether things are going well by how the meditation feels.

**Q4: Why is patience important in meditation?**

**A4:** Patience is necessary to step back from suffering and observe it without identifying with it. It allows you to remain balanced and keep practicing even when things don't go well immediately.

**Q5: What advice did Ajaan Mun give about uncertain thoughts during meditation?**

**A5:** Ajaan Mun advised stepping back and remaining with the sense of the observer if uncertain thoughts arise. Don't engage with them right away; just watch and wait to see if they pass or if they need to be counteracted with other techniques.

**Q6: How does balance play a role in meditation practice?**

**A6:** Balance is crucial in applying principles. You need to find the middle ground between being too strict or too lenient with yourself. Like a carpenter knowing when to hold a tool and when to switch to another, you need to know when to apply different techniques in meditation.

**Q7: What is the danger of being too proud or too lenient in meditation?**

**A7:** Both extremes can lead to pride. Being too strict can lead to pride in your discipline, while being too lenient can result in pride about your ease. Both attitudes can hinder progress, as they distort your practice and sense of balance.

**Q8: How did the Buddha learn to discern skillful actions?**

**A8:** The Buddha developed his discernment by observing the results of his actions and learning from them. He asked questions like, "Where does this lead?" and "What does this do to the mind?" This helped him balance principles and avoid acting on extremes.

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Here's a Q&A from the page you provided:

**Q1: How can progress in meditation be measured?**

**A1:** Progress is difficult to measure directly, as it's not always linear. Sometimes you might feel like you're regressing in certain aspects. However, awareness of the mind and mindfulness tend to improve, and this sensitivity to the mind's movements is a form of progress.

**Q2: What should you focus on in your meditation practice?**

**A2:** Focus on the present moment, specifically the breath you are breathing right now. Don't get fixated on comparisons to past practices or results, as they are no longer relevant. Each moment of meditation should be better than the last simply because it is the present moment you're dealing with.

**Q3: Can meditation automatically make your life better?**

**A3:** No, increased mindfulness and concentration during meditation do not automatically make other aspects of your life better unless you consciously apply the discernment gained in meditation to your daily life.

**Q4: How can you improve the application of mindfulness in daily life?**

**A4:** The key is to observe your thoughts and actions "right now" in each moment. Whether you're speaking to someone or dealing with emotions, consistently applying mindfulness helps to develop greater sensitivity and awareness throughout the day.

**Q5: How can you progress in meditation?**

**A5:** Progress occurs when you can notice distractions as they form and quickly return your focus to the breath. The quicker you catch distractions, the better your mindfulness and alertness become. Over time, this creates a momentum that helps you develop and deepen your practice.

**Q6: What does progress in meditation look like?**

**A6:** Progress may not always be obvious, but it often shows up in unexpected ways. For instance, you might notice that things that would normally upset you no longer have the same effect, or you can more easily detach from emotions and thoughts as they arise.

**Q7: Why might you become discouraged when noticing more defilements in the mind?**

**A7:** It's natural to feel discouraged when you become more aware of your defilements, but this awareness is actually a sign of progress. Just like dusting a room reveals more dust, increased mindfulness shows you more of what you can work on, which is an opportunity to improve.

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